

METHODOLOGY OF TANTAWI JAWHARI AND ZAGHLOUL NAGGAR IN THE  
SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF THE HOLY QUR'ÂN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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There are several established approaches to Tafsîr- interpretation of the holy Qur'ân. Al-Tafsîr al-'Ilmî - the scientific interpretation of the Holy Qur'ân is one of the approaches which is lately emerged in the discipline of Tafsîr. Tantawi Jawhari and Zaghoul Naggar are two prominent Egyptian Muslim scholars who focused on scientific issues of the Qur'ân in their tafsîr works "Al-Jawâhir fî tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-karîm and "Tafsîr al-Ayât al-Kawâniyyah" respectively. They interpreted the Qur'ânic verses from scientific viewpoint. They agreed on some issues while differed on some others. In this connection, this paper aims to clarify the methodology of both scholars in their Tafsîr using a comparative analysis method. Among the most significant findings of this paper is that the interpretation of Zaghoul Naggar are more precise as well as relevant to the applied science compared to the interpretation of Tantawi Jawhari. This paper also concluded that proper Qur'ânic knowledge and scientific insights are required for the one who wants to interpret the Qur'anic verses concerning the natural phenomena and the scientific indications; otherwise, lacking in any of them will lead to misinterpretation of the message of Allah- the guidance of humankind.

**Key Words:** Methodology, Scientific Interpretation, Tantawi Jawhari, Zaghoul Naggar, Natural Phenomena.

**INTRODUCTION**

The scientific interpretation (*al-Tafsîr al-'Ilmî*) is a newly developed approach of *Tafsîr* (interpretation of the meaning of the holy Qur'an) whereby the *Mufasssîr* (scholar of tafsîr/interpreter) tries to clarify the verses of the Holy Qur'ân related to scientific indications, cosmic symbols and natural phenomena in the light of proven or experimental science, modern discoveries and authentic theories.

In Scientific interpretation of the Holy Qur'ân, scholars focused on the scientific dimensions of the verses and came up with applied discoveries to spell out the phenomena. Tantawi Jawhari (1870AC–1940AC) and Zaghoul Naggar (1933AC-) are two Egyptian Muslim scholars who focused in their *tafsîr* works "Al-Jawâhir fî tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-karîm"<sup>1</sup> and "Tafsîr al-Ayât

<sup>1</sup>Tantawi Jawhari, *Al-Jawâhir fî tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Karîm*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. (Beirut: DÊr al- Kutub al- 'Ilmiyyah, 2004).



*al-Kawniyyah*<sup>2</sup> respectively on scientific issues in the *Qur'Ēn*. They have paid special attention to the scientific inter-relation of the verses that contain discussion on natural phenomena and dealt with the *ĒyĒt* from the scientific viewpoint. They have contributed to the scientific interpretation of the holy Qur'an and both have some distinctions which are important for understanding the scientific indications of the holy Qur'an. To the best knowledge of the researchers, study on Naggar's commentaries on thematic exegesis of the holy Qur'Ēn specially verses that have scientific significance is absent in the literature.

Some studies have been conducted on the *TafsĒr* of Tantawi Jawhari. However, the researchers did not find any study comparing between the methodologies of both *Mufasssirs* which is important to understand the development of the scientific approach of the interpretation of the holy Qur'an. Hence, there is a need to study the methodologies of these two legendary scholars of the scientific interpretation of the Holy Qur'Ēn.

This paper is mainly divided into three sections. The first section consists of a brief account of Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari's life and his methodology of scientific interpretation of the holy Qur'an while the following section briefly describes the life of Zaghoul Naggar and his methodology. The final section compares between the methodologies of both scholars.

## TANTAWI JAWHARI AND HIS METHODOLOGY

### A Brief Account of Tantawi Jawhari's Life

Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari is considered a leading pioneer of the school of Scientific Miracles. His famous *TafsĒr* "*Al-JawĒhir fĒ TafsĒr al-Qur'Ēn al-KarĒm*" is a huge collection of Scientific Miracles of the Holy Qur'Ēn which he worked on relentlessly for around 13 years (1922-1935)

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<sup>2</sup>ZaghĒl RĒghib MuĒammad al-NajjĒr, *TafsĒr al-ĒyĒt al-kawniyyah*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. (Al-QĒhirah: Maktabah al-ShurĒq al-Dawliyyah, 2007).



and completed it into 25 volumes. Here we describe the methodology which has been followed in his *Tafsîr*.

### Methodology of Tantawi Jawhari

Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari gathered in his *Tafsîr* "*Al-Jawâhir fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-karîm*" information, documents and data of all branches of knowledge. To interpret the verses, he did not confine himself to religious sciences only rather he included practical sciences also. Here, Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari provided extensive discussions on Geology, Zoology, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Embryology, Astronomy, Ecology, Botany, Anatomy, History, Architecture, Space Science, Sea Science and so on. His main target in discussing all these science related issues was to draw the attention of the Muslim *Ummah* to inspire them to learn modern sciences. Besides, he identified that the negligent mind that does not want to learn Science and technology as a prime reason for the Muslim *Ummah* to be degraded and degenerated all over the world. He argued that, Muslims themselves are responsible for the current degeneration happening all over the World. Hence, he invited the Muslim *Ummah* to his vision of acquiring scientific knowledge and building a better civilization.

He organized his *Tafsîr* according to the chapters of the Holy Qur'ân, not according to the Qur'ânic *Juz'* i.e. *Sûrah al-Fâtiĥah* then *Sûrah al-Baqarah* and then *Sûrah Ôl 'Imrân*, etc. His *Tafsîr* was compiled into 25 volumes with an extra volume where he discussed some issues that he missed in the previous volumes. When he interpreted every *Sûrah* he mentioned the place of revelation and the number of verses in it. Sometimes, we found that he commenced with a big introduction before he started the *Sûrah*, as we see in *Sûrah al-Mĕ'idah* where he discussed about *Halal* and *ĥarĕm* pertaining to consumption of animals.



At the very outset, Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari divided all the verses of every *sĖrah* into several sections and he named these sections “*al-Maqġad*”<sup>3</sup> (objective) or “*al-Qism*” (section). For example, he classified *SĖrah al-Mu’minĖn* into three *Maqġids*. The first *Maqġad* is on human creation, the second *Maqġad* is on stories of some prophets and finally the third *Maqġad* is on a general address of God to his messengers.<sup>4</sup> After he classified the *SĖrah* into *Maqġid*, he started the linguistic interpretation of the verses in detail. Then he described the relation of the current *SĖrah* with the previous *SĖrah*. After describing the relationship and linguistic interpretation of every single *Maqġad*, he explored some witticism which he named *LaġĖfah*<sup>5</sup> from the *Maqġad*. For example, he explored three *LaġĖfahs* from the first *Maqġad* of *SĖrah al-Mu’minĖn*. The first *LaġĖfah* is on the verse no. 12, the second *LaġĖfah* is on verse no. 17 and lastly the third *LaġĖfah* is on verse no. 21.<sup>6</sup> Every so often, if he considered any verse to be highlighted more because of its paramount essence, he discussed the verse under a point named “*Jawharah*” (essential being)<sup>7</sup>.

While maintaining these common rules, at times he discussed several issues related to the verses or interrelated with the teaching of the verses. At these points, he raised the issues in particular titles and classified them into some parts or seasons which he named “*Faġġ*”. For instance, in *SĖrah al-NĖr*, he discussed the issue of decoration of the world by apparent lighting as well as interior lighting and divided the issue into five parts or *Faġġ*.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes he mentioned some stories in his *TafsĖr* to make the exegesis clear to the readers; that time he named these

<sup>3</sup> Although the literal meaning of *al-Maqġad* is main objective, here he used the term as main parts or units.

<sup>4</sup> T. Jawhari, *Al-JawĖhir fĖ TafsĖr al-Qur’Ėn al-karĖm*, (Beirut: DĖr al-Kutub al-’Ilmiyyah, 2004), Vol. 11, P. 112.

<sup>5</sup> It is the subtle issue in *Maqġad* which he considered very significant for his reader but usually people ignore it unconsciously. That is why he emphasized that discussion namely *Lalġfah*.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, P. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Vol. 12, P.191.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, P. 62



stories as “*ikÉyah*” (*report*)<sup>9</sup>. Besides, when he discussed anything miraculous or amazing then he placed the discussion under the title of “*AjÉ’ib*” (wonders) or “*GharÉ’ib*” (peculiar things)<sup>10</sup>.

On occasion, Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari talked about some important topics in his *TafsÊr* then he classified the topic into “*MasÉ’il*” (issues). For instance, when he interpreted *SÊrah al-FÊtiÍah* and described the meaning of “*Rabb al-‘ÓlamÊn*”, he explained in detail the dynamism of Devine *Tarbiyah* (education) to the entire universe. Then he mentioned eight *MasÉ’il* (issues) under the discussion of *Tarbiyah*.<sup>11</sup>

### *Non-Reference Approach to Classical TafsÊr*

As we know ÛabarÊ, QurÍubÊ, Ibn KathÊr, Fakhr al-DÊn al-RÊzÊ, al-ZamakhsharÊ, al-BayÌÊwÊ, al-BaghawÊ, AbÊ ×ayyÊn and al-JalÍÊÎ are pioneers of Science of *TafsÊr* because they were nearer to the golden age and the age after that. Besides, their time was safer than the later time from all fabrications and misinterpretation in the Science of *TafsÊr*. They guided the way of *tafsÊr* for the next generation. Later, when *mufasssirÊn* interpreted the Holy book of Allah, they usually relied on classical *tafsÊr* and referred to it. As we see in *ruÍ al-ma‘Êni*, *tafsÊr al-manÊr*, *durr al-manthÊr* and *zilÊl al-Qur‘Ên*, the authors always referred to classical *tafsÊr* for their linguistic explanation, jurisprudential views, ideological opinions, logical arguments, social matters, theological discussions and so forth. But Tantawi Jawhari did not refer to any classical *mufasssirÊn* in his *tafsÊr* book in any interpretation of verses of the Holy Qur‘Ên. It seems that he preferred *tafsÊr bi al-ra’y* instead of *tafsÊr bi al-ma‘thÊr*.

### *Reliance on Others’ Empirical Findings Natural Phenomena*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, Vol. 10, P. 128.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, Vol. 12, P. 195, 277.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1, PP. 7-12.



Tantawi Jawhari collected all the findings and opinions or information from others but he did not conduct empirical research himself on the natural phenomena mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân. Sometimes he just explained the issue of *al-ÉyÉt al-kawniyyah* without providing an in-depth discussion on it. For example, in the interpretation of *SÉrah al-ZilzÉl* (chapter of earthquake), he did not discuss the reason or mechanism of earthquake properly. As a Scientific *TafsÉr* it was his core duty to clarify such a significant issue related to natural phenomena.

In this *ÉÉrah*, he was supposed to explain the causes of an occurring earthquake, frequency of occurrence, effects of earthquake like shaking, ground rupture, landslides, fires, and floods and so on. But unfortunately he never touched on these important issues in his interpretation in an academic manner. Rather, he provided some disaster data on what happened to Italy in its earthquake in 1930. He just quoted some statistics from correspondent of *al-AhrÉm* newspaper of how many persons are injured and killed because of the earthquake and the name of the cities where it occurred.<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, in *SÉrah al-WÉqiyah*, when he interpreted the verse where Allah took the oath upon *mawÉqi' al-nujÉm* in verses no. 75 and 76, he just asserted that the oath of these verses indicates to a great significance of stars as well as setting of the stars. Besides he stated that *mawÉqi' al-nujÉm* refers to projection of stars in their setting and mansions or adobes.<sup>13</sup>

This *mawÉqi' al-nujÉm* is called, in space science terminology, black hole which is considered a giant object in space ever discovered. Jhon Michell<sup>14</sup> was the first person known to

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, Vol. 25, PP. 279-280.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Vol. 224, P. 83.

<sup>14</sup> Jhon Michell (1724-1793) was an English scientist who provided pioneering insights in a wide range of scientific fields, including astronomy, geology, optics, and gravitation. He was the first person known to propose the existence of black holes, the first to suggest that earthquakes travel in waves, the first to explain how to manufacture artificial magnets, and the first to apply statistics to the study of the cosmos, recognizing that double stars were a product of mutual gravitation.



propose the existence of the black hole. In this verse, he did not provide any scientific discussion regarding *mawĒqi' al-nujĒm* (black hole) at all. But it was very much relevant to explain this natural phenomena to interpret the verse. If he would just quote from others and at least narrate some facts and findings on black hole here that would be an appreciable job but he did not do this. It seems that the information on black hole was unknown to him or he had no proper access on such scientific matter. Since he is considered a pioneer of *al-tafsĒr al-'ilmĒ*, he was supposed to mention here what black hole is actually, the origin, formation and evolution of it but he simply discussed the literal meaning of *mawĒqi' al-nujĒm* (black hole) and overlooked the inter-scientific matter which was very important here to be discussed.

#### *Reliance on Contemporary Scientific Inventions*

The main intention of Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari in his *TafsĒr Al-JawĒhir fĒ TafsĒr al-Qur'Ēn al-karĒm* was to describe the wonders of this universe that the Holy Qur'Ēn referred to, based on the most recent developments of modern science and technology. That is why, if the verse provided any information regarding the sun, moon and stars or their orbits, then he explained the verse based on data provided by the latest invention of Astronomy of his time. If the verse is related to plantation or cultivation or something like this, he explained the verses with an expansive discussion on the most recent agricultural or botanical discoveries of his time.

As we see in the very first *sĒrah* of the Holy Qur'Ēn in *SĒrah al-FĒtiĒah*, when he explained the word *al-'ĒlamĒn* in the verse *Rabb al-'ĒlamĒn*, he defined this world or universe as a multi-dimensional world or universe and classified it into two classifications. The first is the Under World and the second is the Upper World. He stated that, the Upper World consisted of the



sun, moon, stars, galaxy, black holes and so on. Then he started to discuss the continuous expansion of the world especially the massive solar system.<sup>15</sup> He stated that the sun is 1.3 million size bigger than the earth we live on. It is a star at the center of the solar system and the most important source of energy for life on earth. It is a nearly perfect spherical ball of hot plasma, with internal convective motion that generates a magnetic field via a dynamo process. Its diameter is about 109 times that of the earth and about three quarters of the sun's mass consists of hydrogen; the rest is mostly helium, with much smaller quantities of heavier elements, including oxygen, carbon, neon and iron.<sup>16</sup>

After that, he discussed the solar system which comprises the sun and the planets that orbit it, either directly or indirectly. Of those planets that orbit the sun directly, the largest eight are planets that form the planetary system around it, while the remainders are comets and asteroids. Of those that orbit the sun indirectly, two are larger than the smallest planet. It is presumed that the solar system formed 4.6 billion years ago from the gravitational collapse of a giant interstellar molecular cloud. The vast majority of the system's mass is in the sun, with most of the remaining mass contained in Jupiter. The four smaller inner planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars, are terrestrial planets, being primarily composed of rock and metal. The four outer planets are giant planets, being substantially more massive than the terrestrials. The two largest, Jupiter and Saturn, are gas giants, being composed mainly of hydrogen and helium; the two outermost planets, Uranus and Neptune, are ice giants, being composed largely of substances with relatively high melting points compared with hydrogen and helium, called ices, such as water, ammonia and methane. All planets have almost circular orbits that lie within a nearly flat disc called the ecliptic. The Under

<sup>15</sup> T. Jawhari, *Al-JawÉhir fÊ TafsÊr al-Qur'Ên al-karÊm*, (Egypt: MaËba'ah MuËlfaÊ al-BÊbÊ al-xalabÊ wa AwlÊduhu, 1930), Vol. 1, PP.13-14

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, P. 14.



World is the hidden world under the sea where a huge number of living creatures dwell and the world we see on this earth i.e. the visible world which consists of human beings, animals, plants and minerals. The hidden sea world is a newly invented miracle which has been recently explored by sea experts. He said that he read from some magazines that there are some peculiar species of fishes living under the dark layer of sea which is many miles deeper than the light of the sun. He wrote about the blue whale, the biggest creation on earth. The blue whale is a marine mammal belonging to the baleen whales at 30 meters (98 ft) in length and 180 tones; it is the largest extant animal and is the heaviest known to have existed.<sup>17</sup>

Then he mentioned some kind of fish of the sea world. One breed of fish found in Alaska<sup>18</sup> contains huge amount of oil in its body. The fishermen catch it to collect the fat and use the oil of its body to fuel of lamps. Another sort of fish found in China if anybody eats its flesh, will start laughing and keep laughing until he dies. The Chinese government banned the fish from being sold in the local markets. They use this fish in jail for the prisoners for some special purpose. After that, he described some other elements of the Under World substances like several kinds of minerals such as gold, silver, zinc, iron, magnesium, potassium, etc. Eventually, he discussed several plants and animals. Then he stated that our Lord Allah (swt) is the Nourisher, Cherisher and Sustainer of these worlds "*Rabb al-‘ÓlamÊn*".<sup>19</sup>

To compare the interpretation of Tantawi Jawhari on "*Rabb al-‘ÓlamÊn*" with others, if we go through the classical *tafsÊr* we can find that most of them (*ÜabarÊ*<sup>20</sup> and Ibn KathÊr<sup>21</sup> for example) referred to Ibn ‘Abbas’s saying where he defined *al-‘ÓlamÊn* in the verse in relevance to

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> One of the states of the U.S., situated in the northwest extremity of the North American continent.

<sup>19</sup> T. Jawhari, *Al-JawÊhir fÊ TafsÊr al-Qur’Ên al-karÊm*, Op. cit., PP. 15-16.

<sup>20</sup> M. Ibn JarÊr, *JÊmi‘ al-bayÊn fÊ ta’wÊl al-Qur’Ên*, (Damascus: Mu‘assasah al-risÊlah, 2000), Vol. 1, P. 143.

<sup>21</sup> A. Ibn KathÊr, *TafsÊr al-Qur’Ên al-‘aDÊm*, (Beirut: DÊr al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2002), Vol. 1, P. 45.



everything that exists with the exclusion of Allah the Creator of the entire universe, whether it is rational or irrational creation; visible or invisible. It means that the word *al-‘ÓlamÊn* is a collective noun used in the Holy Qur’Ên in reference to the entire world of creation whatever that exists therein. In this case, the Scientific *TafsÊr* of Tantawi Jawhari would only help us to understand and comprehend the visible part of the world (*‘Élam al-shahÉdah*), the world that is subject to empirical investigation of modern science, but it is not able to give us the explanation about the invisible part of the world (*‘Élam al-ghaib*).

He discussed storms in the third part of *SÊrah HÊd* and he named the discussion “Storms in Modern Science”. He said this earth consists of 26 special layers. These layers are composed through six long ages. Through all these ages the earth got new shapes. Storm age is one of the six ages that gave the world a new shape. A storm is any disturbed state of an environment or astronomical body's atmosphere especially affecting its surface, and strongly implying severe weather.<sup>22</sup>

After mentioning the Éyah “And nothing is hidden from your Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom (or small ant) on the earth or in the heaven. Not what is less than that or what is greater than that but is (written) in a Clear Record”<sup>23</sup> he talked about the atom which is the smallest constituent unit of ordinary matter that has the properties of a chemical element. Every solid, liquid, gas, and plasma is made up of neutral or ionized atoms. Atoms are very small; typical sizes are around 100 pm (a ten-billionth of a meter, in the short scale). Subsequent to this atomic discussion he revealed three motion laws of Newton.

<sup>22</sup> T. Jawhari, *Al-JawÉhir fÊ TafsÊr al-Qur’Ên al-karÊm*, (Beirut: DÊr al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2004), Vol. 6, P. 173.

<sup>23</sup> *SÊrah YÊnus* 10: 61.



The First Law: When viewed in an inertial reference frame, an object either remains at rest or continues to move at a constant velocity, unless acted upon by an external force.

The Second Law: The vector sum of the external forces  $F$  on an object is equal to the mass ( $m$ ) of that object multiplied by the acceleration vector ( $a$ ) of the object:  $F = ma$ .

The Third Law: When one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction of the first body. The three laws of motion were first compiled by Isaac Newton in his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, first published in 1687. Newton used them to explain and investigate the motion of many physical objects and systems.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Quotation from Non-Academic Sources:*

We see in his *Tafsîr* that he quoted from magazines, newspapers and cited many poems from Arabic literature and other literatures alike. He came to an end of an interpretation of *S'erah al-H'ed* by referring to two incidents. The first incident was cited from a magazine which revealed that one of the Christian fathers was a renowned astronomer who predicted World War 1 and the economic crisis worldwide before the War.<sup>25</sup>

In *S'erah Maryam*, he discussed how life exists in this Earth under a title named "Generating Life under Chemical Means" where he quoted from a weekly newspaper namely *Al-Siy'asah*. The gist of what he mentioned from that newspaper is many European scientists believe that big sized animals or superior animals evolved from small sized animals and wild animals from sea animals. Conversely, some other scientists rejected this. Nevertheless, our earlier scholars argued that all animals existed as well as developed around Equator which is regarded as an

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, PP. 20-22.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Vol. 6, P. 234.



imaginary line on the earth's surface equidistant from the North Pole and South Pole, dividing the earth into the Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere as it is the most suitable place for it.<sup>26</sup>

In the interpretation of *SĖrah al-NĖr*, he asserted that this earth is dancing around the sun daily as well as yearly which is known as orbit and axis. The earth does not rest, rather it rotates and dances around the sun with its other planets such as Mars, Neptune, Jupiter and the rest. Immediately, he quoted a poem on earth's rotation and all planets in the space.<sup>27</sup> At times, he cited poems written by British poets. For instance, in *SĖrah ŪĖhĖ*, *Maqlġad* three under the linguistic discussion he quoted two poems of two British poets, Trank and William Watton accordingly.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Use of Figures:*

Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari used in his *TafsĖr* enormous number of images of several animals, birds, organs of human body and many more. Likewise, he used diagrams, atlases and tables. When he interpreted the verse "*And it is He who produced for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful*",<sup>29</sup> he wrote on the sensory of eye and ear and provided pictures of the eye and ear mechanism".<sup>30</sup>

In *SĖrah al-NĖr*, he discussed on birds and explained the reason why they migrate far away in winter and summer. The reason, he expressed, is collecting food from nature. Moreover, the birds are encouraged to migrate in order to find a safe place to protect themselves from natural disasters and wild animals. Every year, with the arrival of winter, migratory birds of various

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, Vol. 10, P. 25.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Vol. 12, P. 78.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Vol. 10, PP. 168-169.

<sup>29</sup> *SĖrah al-Mu'minĖn* 23:78.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Vol. 11, P. 198.



species move around the globe for their innate necessity. Along with this discussion he provided some pictures of birds collected from a book named "Science Feral".<sup>31</sup>

He had a discussion on insect growth in the exegesis of *SĖrah ŨĖhĖ* where he gave a diagram of floss showing how it develops from the small insect to a flying creature.<sup>32</sup> In addition, he sketched a table on human body functions and numerical box in the exegesis of *SĖrah al-FurqĖn*.<sup>33</sup>

### *Comparative Approach to Religions*

Actually, his *TafsĖr Al-JawĖhir fĖ TafsĖr al-Qur'Ėn al-karĖm* is a diverse collection of all religious and scientific discussions. That is why for any *Ėyah* related to any issue of comparative religion, he came up with several references from other religious books. As we have found he quoted from *InjĖl BarnĖbĖ* the most reliable biblical text to christians. In *SĖrah Maryam*, he illustrated the meaning of *al-Kalimah* and brought several books as well as references from some scriptures of ancient religions.<sup>34</sup>

## ZAGHLOUL NAGGAR AND HIS METHODOLOGY

### **A Brief Account of Zaghloul Naggar's Life:**

Zaghloul Naggar is an Egyptian geologist and prominent contemporary Muslim scholar who contributed immensely in the area of Scientific Miracles of the Holy Qur'Ėn and *Sunnah* by writing books and articles, delivering lectures, conducting radio and television programs and so forth. He wrote more than 50 books in Arabic, English and French. His *TafsĖr*, "*TafsĖr al-ŖyĖt al-Kawniyyah*" is one of the rich collections of scientific interpretation of the Holy Qur'Ėn of the

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Vol. 12, P. 38.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, Vol. 10, P. 135.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, Vol. 12, PP. 237-239.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, Vol. 10, PP. 40-42.



current era. Zaghloul al-Najjār is considered as an authority on Scientific Miracles in both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. As a living scholar, he has experienced all the latest scientific inventions, discoveries and theories which supported him in interpreting the holy Qur'ān from a scientific angle. His methodology he followed in his *Tafsīr* is described below.

### Methodology of Zaghloul Naggar

His *Tafsīr* "*Tafsīr al-Ayāt al-Kawniyyah*" consists of four volumes with 2287 pages in total. The first volume starts with *Sūrah al-Baqarah* and ends with *Sūrah al-Isrā'*. The second volume starts with *Sūrah al-Kahf* and ends with *Sūrah Luqmān*. The third volume starts with *Sūrah al-Sajdah* and ends with *Sūrah al-Qamar*. Finally, the fourth volume starts with *Sūrah al-Ra'īm* and ends with *Sūrah al-Qūr'ān*.

Every single volume of his *Tafsīr* starts with an introduction by the publisher then it provides a short biography of Zaghloul Naggar in chronological order. After that, it presents the table of contents. Afterwards, it puts forward an extended preface of the writer of 30 pages where he discussed several aspects of Qur'ānic miracles, origin of scientific approach of *Tafsīr*, Muslim scholarship on scientific interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān and their different points of view on it. Finally, he began the scientific interpretation of the *Sūrahs* of that volume. At the end of the fourth volume he provide a searchlight index which he named as *Kashshaf* and he made this index topic wise for every particular volume separately so that the readers can easily find out their chosen topic by going through this searchlight index.

Usually, when he started the interpretation of a *Sūrah*, he commenced with a point named Scientific indication of the verse (*al-Dalālah al-'Ilmiyyah li al-Āyāt al-Karīmah*) or Scientific



Miracle variable of the verse (*min Awjuh al-I'jÉz al-'IlmÊ fÊ al-Óyah*)<sup>35</sup> unlike few *sÊrahs* where he directly started the scientific discussion with different points.<sup>36</sup> Sometimes, he quoted some sayings as well as opinions of early commentators to make the meaning of the *Óyah* apparent to the readers. For instance, to interpret verse no. 26 of *SÊrah al-Baqarah* he quoted from the *TafsÊr Øafwat al-BayÊn li Ma'ÊnÊ al-Qur'Ên*.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, he quoted from *al-ImÊm al-ÙabarÊ* to interpret verse no. 10 of *SÊrah QÊf*<sup>38</sup>.

Often, he interpreted one Qur'Énic verse with other verses since it is the best way for Qur'Énic interpretation. For example, when he interpreted verse no. 29 of *SÊrah al-Baqarah*:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

*He it is Who created for you all that is on earth. Then He Istawa (rose over) towards the heaven and made them seven heavens and He is the All-Knower of everything* he referred to three Qur'Énic verses from different *sÊrahs* to make the meaning crystal clear. Those three verses are as follow:

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ

*With power did We construct the heaven. Verily, We are Able to extend the vastness of space thereof.*<sup>39</sup>

أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

<sup>35</sup> J. NajjÊr, *TafsÊr TafsÊr al-AyÊt al-Kawniyyah*, (al-QÊhirah: Maktabah al-ShurÊq al-Dawliyyah, 2007), Vol. 1, P. 131.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Vol. 3, P. 133.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, P. 79.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Vol. 3, P. 363.

<sup>39</sup> ØÊrah al-DhrÊiyÊt: 47.



*Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?*<sup>40</sup>

قُلْ أَتُنْكُمُ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أُنْدَادًا ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ  
مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَامَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّائِلِينَ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ  
فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ

Say (O Muhammad): "Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two Days and you set up rivals (in worship) with Him? That is the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists). He placed therein (i.e. the earth) firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance (for its dwellers) in four Days equal (i.e. all these four 'days' were equal in the length of time), for all those who ask (about its creation). Then He Istawa (rose over) towards the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth: "Come both of you willingly or unwillingly." They both said: "We come, willingly."<sup>41</sup>

Besides, he referred to Prophetic traditions as well to interpret the *Éyah* of some *sÉrah*. For instance, to interpret the first verse of *SÉrah al-NisÉ'*:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا  
وْنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.

<sup>40</sup> ØÉrah al-AnbiyÉ': 30.

<sup>41</sup> ØÉrah FuÍlilat: 9-11.



He quoted a prophetic tradition from *al-ʿUabarĒnĒ* to shed light on the meaning of the verse.<sup>42</sup> The prophetic tradition is:

أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال له : ما ولد لك قال : يا رسول الله وما عسى أن يولد لي ؟ إما غلام وإما جارية قال : فمن يشبه ؟ قال : ما عسى أن يشبه ؟ إما أمه وإما أباه فقال له النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم هامة لا تقولن كذلك إن النطفة إذا استقرت في الرحم أحضرها الله عز وجل كل نسب بينها وبين آدم أما قرأت هذه الآية في كتاب الله عز وجل ( في أي صورة ما شاء ركبك )

*Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) asked one of his companions: You got boy or girl? He replied Oh Prophet of Allah what supposed to be my child? Prophet said whether it is a boy or a girl. Who does it look like? Companion said what should be it look like? Like its mother or father? Prophet said be aware of that! Do not say like this. Indeed, when the semen became steady in mother's womb, Allah shows it whole the genealogy between it and Adam. Did you not recite this verse? In whatever form He willed, He put you together.*<sup>43</sup>

In some cases he raised the issue of the scientific interpretation of the verse by putting a question in the beginning as he did in *SĒrah QĒf*, verse no 6:

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ

*Have they not looked at the heaven above them, how We have made it and adorned it, and there are no rifts in it?*<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, P. 57.

<sup>43</sup> SulaimĒn ibn AĒmad al-ʿUabaranĒ. *Al-Mu'jam al-KabĒr*, al-RĒ', Chapter: RibĒĒ al-LakhmĒ..., ×adĒth no. 4624, (Al-MĒĒil: Maktabah al-'ulĒm wa al-×ikah), 5/74.

<sup>44</sup> ØĒrah QĒf: 50:6



Here he raised a question inquiring that is it possible for the verse to provide the fact of existence of rifts in sky? After raising the question he brought some facts and described that physical and astronomical studies disclaim the availability of rifts in the sky. Those factual grounds are as follow:

- 1- The dark territory in the space does not prove that there are rifts in the sky.
- 2- The expansion of the whole universe also neglects the idea of existence of rifts.
- 3- Antimatter theory in the universe also disclaims the availability of rifts.
- 4- Stages of Big Bang process also contradict the idea of rifts.
- 5- Materials between stars and galaxies also disapprove the notion of sky rifts.<sup>45</sup>

To draw the attention of readers to a certain matter, one of the best academic approaches is raising a question then clarifying the facts by providing supporting evidence and scientific findings. Here Zaghloul Naggar followed the abovementioned approach. By adapting this approach, he made the scientific interpretation of the verse crystal clear and more comprehensible to readers. To the best capacity of the researchers, it seems to be an effective and reasonable way to establish a fact.

#### *Thematic Interpretation (Al-Tafsîr al-Mawd'î)*

Zaghloul Naggar did not interpret every *sûrah* of the Holy Qur'ân in his *Tafsîr*, rather he prioritized the *sûrahs* where he found science related verses most and instead of interpreting all verses of the *sûrah*, he interpreted the verses which contain scientific indications. For instance, the number of verses in *Sûrah al-Baqarah* is 286 but he interpreted only eight verses from it

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Vol. 3, P. 351.



because he found the uppermost scientific significance only in these verses of the *sĒrah*. The verses he interpreted from *SĒrah al-Baqarah* are given below.

أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَّجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِم مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

*Or it is like a rainstorm from the sky within which is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps in dread of death. But Allah is encompassing of the disbelievers.*<sup>46</sup>

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

*He who made for you the earth a bed spread out and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know that there is nothing similar to Him.*<sup>47</sup>

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ

*Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example - that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, "What did Allah intend by this as an example?" He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient.*<sup>48</sup>

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

<sup>46</sup> SĒrah al-Baqarah:19

<sup>47</sup> SĒrah al-Baqarah:22

<sup>48</sup> SĒrah al-Baqarah:26



*It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth. Then He directed Himself to the heaven, [His being above all creation], and made them seven heavens, and He is Knowing of all things.<sup>49</sup>*

وَوَهَبْنَا لَكُمْ السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَالْجِبَالَ وَالْجَارِ الْمُتَقَرَّبَ وَالْجَارِ الْبُعِيدَ وَالْجَارِ الْبُحْرَيْنِ وَالْجَارِ الْبَحْرَيْنِ وَالْجَارِ الْبَحْرَيْنِ وَالْجَارِ الْبَحْرَيْنِ  
أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

*And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you." And they wronged Us not - but they were [only] wronging themselves.<sup>50</sup>*

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

*Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.<sup>51</sup>*

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

*And they ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is harm, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are pure. And when they have purified themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you. Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves."<sup>52</sup>*

<sup>49</sup> SĖrah al-Baqarah:29

<sup>50</sup> SĖrah al-Baqarah:57

<sup>51</sup> SĖrah al-Baqarah:74

<sup>52</sup> SĖrah al-Baqarah:222



وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ  
أُكْلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring [reward for] themselves is like a garden on high ground which is hit by a downpour - so it yields its fruits in double. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]. And Allah, of what you do, is eying.<sup>53</sup>

For instance, the first verse he interpreted from *SĖrah al-Baqarah* is related to weather where Allah (SWT) mentioned some natural phenomena like rainstorm, thunder and lightning. To interpret the verse he came up with a detailed discussion on cyclones and defined it saying that a cyclone is a large scale air mass that rotates around a strong center of low pressure. It is usually described by inward spiraling winds that rotate counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern. All large scale cyclones are centered on areas of low atmospheric pressure. The largest low-pressure systems are cold-core polar cyclones and tropical cyclones of the largest scale.<sup>54</sup> In addition, he discussed hurricanes, typhoons and tornados to help readers understand the interpretation better. To interpret this verse it was required to visualize how thunder and rain storms form and work. Zaghloul Naggar provided here all the necessary facts and information related to rain storms, thunder and lightning successfully.

### *Setting an Outline of Each SĖrah*

At the very outset of every *sĖrah* in his *TafsĖr* he provided a brief outline of all the natural phenomena and scientific indications that existed in the *sĖrah*. He named this point (*Min al-ŌyĖt*

<sup>53</sup> SĖrah al-Baqarah:265

<sup>54</sup> J. NajjĖr, *TafsĖr al-AyĖt al-Kawniyyah*, Op. cit., Vol. 1, PP. 64-68.



*al-Kawniyyah fĒ SĒrah* ....) Universal or Cosmic signs of *SĒrah* .... For example, at the beginning of *SĒrah Ól 'ImrĒn* he mentioned nine indications which are given below.

An indication that Allah formed the structure of creations in their mothers' wombs as He wishes.

Rotation of this earth on its axis around the sun makes the night enter into the day and makes the day enter into the night.

A metaphorical example of bringing the living out from the dead and bringing the dead out from the living.

The creation of Adam and Jesus from soil by the divine command *Kun fayakĒn* (be and it was).

The very first house of Makkah is full of blessings and guidance for the whole world.

To Allah belongs the kingdoms of heavens and earth and whatever is in between everything shall return to Him.

Everyone shall taste death and there is no way to flee from it.

Healing a depression by a new depression to reduce its pain.

In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are some strong signs of the existence of God for the people of wisdom.<sup>55</sup>

As a scientist, Zaghloul Naggar has given priority to cosmic signs of the Qur'Ēnic verses he interpreted. He carefully determined their importance and avoided any theological disputes or controversy. For example, his view about the creation of Adam and Jesus with the commanding word of Allah (*kun fayakĒn*). This kind of creation is extra-ordinary; Zaghloul Naggar did not explain the issue from a theological perspective rather he provided further scientific explanation how this kind of creation is possible. He argued that the genetic code of human chromosome remain in existence across generations. Thus, billions of people have passed away, billions of

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, P. 129.



people are living now and billions of people to come with all of their genetic portion ending with their first ancestors Adam and Eve. As it is proven Jesus got the genetic portion of his first ancestor Adam and Adam was created from soil. Likewise, Prophet Jesus also had a portion of soil. In this way, Naggar established this extraordinary fact through practical science.<sup>56</sup>

### *Emphasis on Linguistic Meaning*

Literal meaning is a very important fact for a comprehensive understanding of any verse of the Holy Qur'Ēn. For this reason, whoever interprets the Holy Qur'Ēn both in early as well as contemporary time, gives great importance to the literal meaning of certain Qur'Ēnic verses; especially ones that have various meanings when used in different contexts. Zaghoul Naggar also gave special emphasis on the literal meaning of the verses that require further explanation. When he interpreted the verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ

*Verily! It is Allah Who causes the seed-grain and the fruit-stone (like date-stone, etc.) to split and sprout. He brings forth the living from the dead, and it is He Who brings forth the dead from the living. Such is Allah, then how are you deluded away from the truth?*<sup>57</sup>

He elaborated the literal meaning of grains/seeds (*al-ṣabb*) and fruit stone (*al-NawĒ*) in a descriptive manner. He discussed the literal usage of all types of grains and seeds found in the Arab world, like wheat, corn, oat, bean, fenugreek, lentil, lupine and the like. Likewise, to explain the types of fruit stone, he talked about dates, apricots, plums, peaches and olives.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, P. 146.

<sup>57</sup> SĒrah al-An'Ēm 6: 95.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1, P. 223.



He quoted literal explanation from both classical as well as modern *tafsÊrs* simultaneously. For example, when he interpreted this verse:

فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

(He is the) Cleaver of the daybreak. He has appointed the night for resting, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. Such is the measuring of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.<sup>59</sup>

He quoted *Øafwah al-tafÊsÊr* and *al-Muntakhab fÊ tafsÊr al-Qur'Ên al-KarÊm* from the modern side and *al-ÛabarÊ* from the classical side. In *al-Muntakhab*, it is mentioned that *fÊliq al-iÛbÊÎ* means the one who splits out the darkness of night by the light of day and in *Øafwah al-tafÊsÊr* the meaning is described as the beginner of light. On the other hand, in *al-ÛabarÊ*, a classical *tafsÊr* says that *fÊliq al-iÛbÊÎ* provides the meaning of the one who brings out the pillar of morning from the dimness of night.<sup>60</sup>

### More Reliance on Latest Scientific Discoveries

Zaghloul Naggar used the most recent scientific information in every single verse that he interpreted in his *TafsÊr* book *TafsÊr al-AyÊt al-Kawniyyah*. When he interpreted the verse:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيَضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَعَرَايِبٌ سُودٌ

See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of varying colours, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours and (others) very black,<sup>61</sup> he said the Holy Qur'Ên provides advanced information on the biological aspects of mountains and their colorful diversity. It was recently shown that there is a continuous change in the mountains' colors due to the rain that falls on it. Some scientists have even said that the change in the color of rocks in mountains is

<sup>59</sup> SÊrah al-An'Êm 6: 96.

<sup>60</sup> J. NajjÊr, *TafsÊr TafsÊr al-AyÊt al-Kawniyyah*, Op. cit., Vol. 1. P. 231.

<sup>61</sup> SÊrah FÊtir 35: 27.



due to the nature of rain and the rocks' interaction with this rain. The colors of mountains are also affected by the surrounding environment, temperature and weather conditions surrounding these mountains. We could not see these changes immediately because they occur at intervals ranging from thousands of years to millions of years.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ أَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ عَلَى أَنْ نَبْدِلَ أَشْوَاقَكُمْ  
وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

*Have you seen that which you emit? Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator? We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone. In that We will change your likenesses and produce you in that [form] which you do not know. And you have already known the first creation, so will you not remember?,<sup>63</sup>*

To interpret the phrase *mĒ tumnĒn*, he explained the issue of human creation from the very root level like DNA, chromosome, cell, etc. He further discussed human genetic coding elaborately which is a set of rules by which information encoded within genetic material DNA or mRNA sequences is translated into proteins by living cells. Biological decoding is accomplished by the ribosome, which links amino acids in an order specified by RNA, using transfer RNA (tRNA) molecules to carry amino acids and to read the mRNA three nucleotides at a time. The genetic code is highly similar across all organisms and can be expressed in a simple table with 64 entries. The code defines how sequences of these nucleotide triplets, called codons, specify which amino

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, Vol. 3, PP. 119-117.

<sup>63</sup> SĒrah al-WĒqī'ah 56: 58-62.



acid will be added next during protein synthesis. For example, protein synthesis in human mitochondria relies on a genetic code that differs from the standard genetic code.<sup>64</sup>

In the same *SĒrah* when he interpreted the verse

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ .

*And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down?*,<sup>65</sup> he explained in detail about how the clouds form and prepare to drop rain based on modern scientific theory. He mentioned that clouds form when water vapor rises into the atmosphere and condenses onto microscopic particles, such as dust, dirt and sea salt. When the sun heats water in the oceans, rivers, lakes and other sources, some of it evaporates, or transforms from liquid to water vapor. Through this process, raindrops begin forming when water vapor condenses on micrometer-sized particles of dust floating in the atmosphere. The dust particles grow to millimeter-sized droplets, which are heavy enough to begin falling. As they fall, the droplets accumulate more and more moisture, until they become the large raindrops that we see here on the ground.<sup>66</sup>

#### *Use of Latest Scientific Figures:*

Almost one fifth of his *TafsĒr* is captured by several related pictures and other photography. As a meticulous scientist, he had the opportunity to collect the most recent as well as current scientific images and photography. A large number of the latest scientific images, diagrams, geographical maps, equations and tables are used to make the interpretations vivid and clear. For instance, he

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, Vol. 4, PP. 82-85.

<sup>65</sup> *SĒrah al-WĒqī'ah*: 68-69.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, Vol. 4, PP. 101-108.



provided some scientific images of the solar system, the galaxy's Milky Way,<sup>67</sup> diagrams of water cycle,<sup>68</sup> geographical maps that show Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman,<sup>69</sup> some mathematical equations on Dead Sea the prove that it is the lowest territory of the earth,<sup>70</sup> a table demonstrating the major elements of the earth,<sup>71</sup> historical images of people of caves,<sup>72</sup> images of various animals<sup>73</sup> and plants,<sup>74</sup> a bar chart on violence or harshness of animal sound,<sup>75</sup> a flow chart on DNA replication<sup>76</sup> and many more. Additionally, he used numerous English terminology and English translation of Arabic words in his *Tafsîr* flanked between two brackets.<sup>77</sup>

### COMPARISON BETWEEN THE METHODOLOGIES OF BOTH SCHOLARS

Based on the analysis of the methodologies of both scholars, it is observed that the interpretation of Zaghloul Naggar is more precise and more relevant to practical science than the interpretation of Tantawi Jawhari. However, it is observed that there are some similarities as well as differences found in their commentaries. For example, special attributes of Jawhari in his *tafsîr* is using some terms which are not found in Naggar's commentary i.e. *Maqîad* (main objective), *Laîfah*, *Jawharah* (essential being), *ikÉyah* (story), *'AjÉ'ib*, *GharÉ'ib* and *MasÉ'il* (issues) and so forth. On the other hand, Naggar used a special term namely *al-KashÉf* (searchlight index) so that reader

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, P. 117.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, P. 340.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, Vol. 4, P. 63.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, P. 428.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, Vol. 4, P. 147.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, PP. 56-57.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, PP. 318-319.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, Vol. 3, PP. 332-333, 370-372.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, P. 502.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, Vol. 3, P. 454.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, P. 184, Vol. 2, PP. 270-271.



find their chosen topic easily from his *tafsîr* book. Besides, sometimes he raised questions and provided the answers by his own to make the discussion clear.

Jawhari's *tafsîr* consists of 25 volumes which include interpretation of all verses but Naggar's *tafsîr* is only of 4 volumes that focussed on selected verses that contains scientific indications. Furthermore, Jawhari did not refer classical *tafsîr* where Naggar did. Most of the pieces of information are shared in Jawhari's commentary are borrowed from other sources. On the contrary, Naggar conducted empirical research by himself because he was a geologist by profession. Quotations from magazine, newspapers and poems are numerous in Jawhari's interpretation but hardly we could find these quotations in Naggar's interpretation. Additionally, Graphical usage of Naggar is greater than Jawhari in interpretation.

Usage of various image, diagrams, geographical maps and table and dependence on modern scientific research, invention and discoveries are common in both of Jawhari and Naggar. In addition, Both specially focused on the verses contain natural phenomena and scientific indication for instance embryology, geology, astronomy, big bang theory, sea science, human psychology, biological aspects of mountains, expansion of the universe and the rest.

As it is known that, Zaghloul Naggar is a geologist in profession; he studied as well as worked in Western universities; conducted several scientific researches throughout the world and wrote on several scientific miracles of the Holy Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. His academic background is entirely science related and he kept this specialization in his future career. Besides, he memorized the Holy Qur'ân at a very early age and received primary religious knowledge from his family. Later on, he became influenced by Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt and personally studied and did research on the Holy Qur'ân and *Sunnah*. This combination of scientific as well as Islamic



knowledge background of Zaghloul Naggar helped him to write on issues of scientific indications of the Holy Qur'ân and eventually to write his *tafsîr*, *Tafsîr al-Ayât al-Kawniyyah*. That is why his interpretation is to the point as well as more scientific than Tantawi Jawhari's interpretation. The only shortcoming noticed by the researchers is that sometimes he repeated the same discussion in more than one verses. Most probably, he repeated in order to make the discussion clearer and he thought that this repetition is needed to provide a better idea of the issue. Furthermore, according to the researchers, the *tafsîr* of Zaghloul Naggar namely "*tafsîr al-ÉyÉt al-kawniyyah*" is a vast collection of scientific information which is helpful to those who have science background or medical background. The general seekers of knowledge might face difficulties in understanding some scientific terms and explanations.

Conversely, Tantawi Jawhari was a classical Islamic scholar and academically, he was not an expert on scientific issues. All he gathered in his interpretation are references, quotations through his reading of books, magazines, scientific booklets and newspapers. It is true that he had a great curious mind to know and learn these scientific issues from a very young age but he was not a specialist like Zaghloul Naggar. He compiled in his interpretation the verses on human embryology with different kinds of information and mixed one discussion with another without maintaining a proper sequence and coordination. At times, he wrote on some issues in a detailed manner but they had no connection and link with the interpretation of the verse. Instead of focusing on core interpretations of the scientific verses, he placed his efforts on explaining additional information and prolonging those additional discussion whether it seems vital or not.

Besides, as we know that science is an ongoing process of progress and advancement, Tantawi Jawhari did not get the latest information like Zaghloul Naggar did because Zaghloul Naggar still lives in this modern world. Moreover, science is progressing with new developments in every



single moment. Consequently, Tantawi Jawhari interpreted the verses based on his knowledge and the scientific developments of his time. At times, he stated some peculiar explanations in his *tafsîr*, which have no apparent relations with religion or science. That is why some of his interpretations seemed superficial or incompatible to the interpretation of Zaghoul Naggar. Actually, his *Tafsîr* book can be named as a big collection or encyclopedia of several branches of Islamic knowledge instead of a proper Scientific *Tafsîr*, although this new field or domain of Qur'anic interpretation was pioneered by him.

## CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, it can be asserted that Tantawi Jawhari interpreted all the *sûrahs* and all the verses of the Holy Qur'ân in his *tafsîr*. On the contrary, Zaghoul Naggar did not interpret all *sûrahs* and verses like Jawhari. He interpreted the verses that contain scientific indications. Although both of them tried their best to interpret the verses of the Holy Qur'ân from a scientific angle, it has been observed that the approach of Naggar is more academic and scientific than the approach of Jawhari in their *tafsîr*.

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